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Queen's University at Kingston

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THE CANADA CORN BILL.

LORD STANLEY'S SPEECH,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON FRIDAY, MAY 19.

Price 2d. ; sent post free for 3d. ; 100 for distribution 12s.

Published by W. E. Painter, Church & State Gazette Office, 342, Strand.

LORD STANLEY rose and spoke to the following effect :—Sir, under ordinary circumstances I should have requested the indulgence of the house in order to enable you at once to leave the chair, and to permit me to make in Committee the statement with which it is my duty, on the part of the Government, to preface the resolutions which I shall eventually have to propose. But the motion of which the right hon. gentleman the member for Taunton has given notice is one which, according to the rules of the house, cannot be submitted when the house has resolved itself into committee ; and I therefore deem it more satisfactory to the house, and more fair towards the right hon. gentleman, that I should give him the opportunity of moving his amendment after he shall have heard my statement, rather than leave him to propose it without any previous explanation on our part as to our objects and intentions. (Hear, hear). And, Sir, I must confess that I am the more desirous of giving such an explanation, and have thought it desirable, to place on record the grounds and motives of the Government, more fully than is usual in a merely preliminary resolution, on account of the very general misapprehensions which exist, and the gross misrepresentations which have been made with regard to the intent and scope of our measure—misapprehensions which have been probably increased by the sensitive condition of the agricultural interest at this moment, which have produced, and, no doubt, may produce a very unfavourable impression, but which I will undertake to show are merely the consequence of misunderstanding. (Hear, hear). Sir, with respect to this matter, I charge no one with misrepresentation ; but at least I am not in error in saying that on both sides of this house the objects of this measure have been much exaggerated ; that, on the one side, the most exaggerated expectations have been raised as to its probable benefit to the consumer—and that, on the other side, a most exaggerated apprehension as to its probable effect on the agriculturist, has been widely and generally entertained. I am aware, Sir, of the difficulties I must encounter in dispelling these fears. I am aware that the arguments I may use in addressing myself to the one side of the house will probably deprive me of some support from the other. Her Majesty's Government are, in fact, open to a sort of cross fire, and I feel that there is hardly any argument which I can address to one party which will not deprive me of some support from members on the other side. (A laugh). But be this as it may, I am determined to avail myself of no considerations of temporary ad-

vantage. (Hear, hear). I shall use no trick to obtain votes. I shall use no artifice to pervert the real facts; I shall not seek to exaggerate; on the contrary, it will be my object to diminish apprehension; and, to prove my sincerity, I will at once frankly acknowledge, that if I did not feel myself bound by a sense of duty—if it were not for the implied promise which was last session held out to the Legislature of Canada—and for the obligation which rests on the Government to fulfil that promise to the best of its ability, I should consider the measure I mean to submit—in reference to the immediate interests of this country—in reference to the interests of the consumer as well as of the producer—of such slight and trivial importance (loud Opposition cries of “Hear, hear”), that, knowing as I do the impolicy and inconvenience of disturbing a great settlement, and knowing too well what are the sensitive feelings of the agriculturists at this particular time—if it were not that we were bound by faith and honour, I should have considered the measure I am about to submit of such comparatively trivial import, that I would not have interfered with that interest by asking you to reopen the question of the Corn Law for the purpose of assenting to a bill of a scope so limited and so confined. (Ironical cheers and laughter from the Opposition.) I hear hon. gentlemen opposite cheering that avowal. I know I am exposed to their sarcasms; but I state again, and distinctly, that I do not seek to magnify the importance of this measure, and that my sole object is to place it in its true light—in a light in which it has not yet been placed before either the house or the country. I do not desire to conciliate for my proposal any support on the ground that it is an extensive measure, or that it is a great advance in free trade principles; for it is no such thing. (Hear, hear.) I do not put it forward as a means of admitting an almost unlimited supply of American corn upon conditions more favourable than at present; for it will do no such thing. (Hear, hear.) I shall not on the one side claim support, or on the other yield in silence to opposition, founded on any mistake as to the real scope and object of my measure. I do not bring that measure forward as a measure of free trade; I do not submit it to you as a bill for facilitating the admission of foreign corn; but I do bring the measure forward as a great boon to one of our most important colonies. (Loud cheers.) I submit it to the house as a colonial and not as a fiscal question. If it was brought forward as a measure affecting either the fiscal or commercial interests of the country, it would more properly be the duty of either my right hon. friend at the head of the Government, or of the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), to propose it to your notice. It is because the measure is purely a colonial measure, that, as the Colonial Minister of the day, I now ask the house to grant to Canada a boon, which though insignificant to you to concede, it will be important to them to receive—a boon which they have solicited for at least five-and-twenty years—a boon to which they attach the greatest importance—which you can grant without sacrifice of your own domestic interests, and which Her Majesty’s Government have on their part pledged themselves to grant in the event of certain conditions being complied with on the part of Canada, which conditions she gratefully accepted and has faithfully fulfilled, (Cheers.) Sir, that is the sum and substance of the measure I am about to sub-

mit. It is a measure apart from the Corn Law—apart from any question of free trade. It lies in a narrow compass; but although it does so, believe me, if it be a measure of pecuniary insignificance to you, your refusal to adopt it will not be insignificant to the interests of Canada. (Hear, hear). Sir, the measure I propose has for its object to give an encouragement to the agriculture of Canada, by admitting grain the produce of Canada, grown as well as ground in Canada, into consumption in this country on more favourable terms than at present, without varying, in any material degree, the effect of the existing law with regard to the produce of the United States. I propose the reduction of the duty on Canadian wheat and wheat flour; I also propose to substitute, on American wheat passing through Canada, the fixed sum of 4s. per quarter for the present varying duty of from 1s. to 5s. per quarter. I do not propose any alteration whatever in the distinction at present drawn between wheat and wheat flour the produce of a foreign country. I do not propose to admit American wheat on terms different from those on which it is now admitted; but what I propose is, to admit American wheat ground into flour in Canada at a duty of 4s. instead of the present varying duty, and that is the sole effect of the measure, as far as American wheat is concerned. Now, Sir, as an hon. gentleman has particularly directed my attention to the state of the law as regards the importation of wheat and wheat flour from the colonies, and as I know that misapprehensions prevail on this point, perhaps the house will permit me to state how the case now stands, how it has stood, and how it has been practically acted on since the year 1828, farther than which period I think it will be unnecessary for me to go back. Wheat has been imported from the Canadas at a duty varying from 5s. to 1s., according to the state of the British market. Flour has been imported from Canada at all times, liable to bear a proportionate amount of duty, according to the value of flour here. On the import of foreign wheat into Canada no duty has been imposed up to the present time. From every part of Europe and from the United States wheat has been admitted into Canada perfectly and entirely free from duty, and that wheat so imported and manufactured into flour in Canada, has ever been considered, if exported to this country, to have obtained and to enjoy all the privileges attaching to colonial produce. (Hear, hear.) Now this is no new regulation; it is no new rule regarding United States or Canadian wheat alone; it is a general principle which has been acted on from time immemorial in the Customs of this country with regard to manufactured goods—that manufactured articles, no matter whence the raw material might come, should be taken as the produce of the country in which the manufacture took place. This question, indeed, was brought under discussion many years back, in a case which is not a little curious. In the 18th of George III.—the year 1788—a question was argued in the Exchequer Chamber, as to what should be the duty on ostrich feathers dressed in France, the said ostrich feathers being claimed as French produce. Now it was clear—it needed no certificate to prove it—that ostrich feathers were not a French production (a laugh); but these feathers having been dressed in France, it was argued that they were a French manufacture, and the point having been discussed in the Exchequer Chamber, it was determined by the judges that the ostrich feathers so dressed in France were entitled to come in and to be charged duty as French goods. I mention this as a

curious case bearing strongly upon this subject. In the year following an act—the 19th Geo. III.—was passed upon the subject. What did that act do? Did it deny the principle? By no means. It provided that the principle should hold perfectly good except with respect to the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, and with this pretty large exception this act continued in operation until it was repealed by the 3rd of George IV. and 6th of Geo. IV. But under the Navigation Act, the 6th of Geo. IV., this broad principle was laid down in these terms—“All manufactured goods shall be deemed to be the produce of the country in which they were manufactured.” A broader principle it would be almost impossible to lay down, and this was the principle established under that act. But it will, no doubt, be questioned that this principle applies to corn? Now, on that point, we have certainly no judicial decision, because the question was never raised so as to be brought under judicial consideration; but in 1830, after the act of 1828 was passed, by which, for the first time, Canadian flour was admitted into this country, the question was raised by the Comptroller of the Customs at Liverpool, who, having some doubts as to whether United States wheat ground in Canada could be admitted as colonial produce, referred the question to the solicitor of the Customs, who gave an unhesitating opinion, “that flour made in Canada from wheat, the produce of the United States, was to be deemed the produce of Canada, and was entitled to enter this country as the produce of a colony, upon the production of the inspector’s certificate applying to colonial produce, and required by the Act of Parliament.” (Hear, hear.) This was the opinion given by the solicitor of the Customs on a question raised by a collector and comptroller of Customs, who asked for a legal authority upon which to act. This is the single case in which the point has ever been raised; and I must next remark, that, to whatever question the law may be open, be the interpretation right or wrong, in the first place, the practice has been without exception to admit United States grown corn, coming from and manufactured in Canada, as Canadian produce—that has been the uniform and unvarying interpretation and practice of the law—and, in the next place, be that law right or be it wrong, this bill does not touch that question—this bill does not refer to that question, and it leaves the law precisely as it now stands. (Hear, hear.) This then is my case. My sole object being the substitution of a permanent fixed duty on foreign wheat (loud cries of “Hear, hear,” from the Opposition)—the substitution of a permanent fixed duty on American wheat imported through the province of Canada, at the rate of 4s. a quarter, for a duty on such wheat varying from 6d. it was formerly, 1s. it is now, to 5s. per quarter. (Hear, hear.) I say, Sir, that that is the sole alteration I propose; and such being the only alteration, I think that her Majesty’s Government has cause to complain of the misrepresentations which have been sedulously disseminated amongst the farmers as to the introduction of United States corn, “which,” say some hon. members, “the Government are seeking to bring in by a back door, not daring to open the front.” (“Hear, hear,” and cheers.) Now, Sir, let me here say, once for all, that neither in this bill, nor in any other bill with which I am connected, nor with which my colleagues are connected, will her Majesty’s Government seek to introduce furtively or by stealth that which they dare not introduce broadly, plainly, and openly. (Loud and repeated cheers.) This “back door,” as you are pleased to call it,

has been open for a space of not less than 15 years (renewed cheers), that is to say, if by the "back door being open" you mean that United States corn can be admitted into Canada duty free, and as flour ground in Canada can obtain admission into the ports of England. (Cheers.) From 1828 to 1843 that door has been open—through that door a considerable portion of American grain has been admitted, and instead of opening that door wider, our proposition is now to take a toll of 3s. upon every quarter of corn that must pass it. And then we are told—I hear it at county meetings—that we are doing an injury to the agricultural interest. The hon. member for Rutland presented this evening a petition, praying that there might be no diminution of agricultural protection; and gentlemen talk and farmers are told that they have grievous reason to complain of her Majesty's Government, for seeking to introduce United States wheat into Canada at a duty of 3s., forgetting, of course, to put the counterpart, that up to this very moment there is no duty at all, and that, instead of paying 3s., United States wheat enters Canada duty free. (Hear, hear). Again: I know it has been stated, at several meetings, that we are about to inflict, by this measure, a grievous injury on the milling interest of this country (hear, hear)—that we are going to introduce United States wheat in the shape of flour, whilst we reject it in its unmanufactured condition. My answer to this is, that we make no alteration whatever in the present state of the law. (Hear). Reject this law altogether, and the milling interest will be in precisely the same condition as if you passed it. You afford the milling interest no protection whatever by its rejection, because, even now, flour from Canada, ground from wheat of the United States, is imported at the colonial rate of duty. This bill, therefore, as to the agricultural interest, or as to the milling interest, can produce no effect whatever if the fixed duty we propose be only equivalent to the existing rate. (Hear, hear). I shall now endeavour to prove that it is so. The present rate of duty—and for the convenience of the house I will refer throughout to the duty on quarters of wheat, without reference to the barrel of flour, and assuming that the due proportion is maintained between wheat and flour—the present rate of duty on United States wheat is precisely the same as on colonial wheat.

MR. ROEBUCK: Do you mean wheat or flour?

LORD STANLEY: I mean that, by the law, as it at present stands, wheat imported from the United States into Canada cannot be imported here except as flour, nor will it be imported in any other way by the law we propose. As flour, as manufactured produce, it will be admitted at the new rate of duty, which, as I said before, we consider equivalent to the old rates. The present duty levied on flour in this country varies from 5s. per quarter when the price is below 55s., to 1s. per quarter when the price rises as high as 58s. Up to 55s. there is a duty of 5s. per quarter. By the measure which I propose there will be levied, at all times and under all circumstances—hon. gentlemen may have the advantage of another cheer, if they please, at the idea of a fixed duty—by the measure which I propose there will be levied, at all times and under all circumstances, a fixed duty (ironical cheers) on wheat imported through Canada of 4s. per quarter, whether the price be 40s. or 60s., instead of a duty which at present amounts to 5s. up to 55s., and thence falls to 1s. as the price rises to 58s. Perhaps hon. gentlemen may say that a reduction of even 1s. per quarter, *i. e.*, from 5s. to

4s., in the duty, is, in the present state of agriculture, a matter of considerable importance; but let it be observed, as appears, indeed, from a paper laid on the table of the house upon the motion of the hon. member for Stoke-upon-Trent, that there has been no year during the last five years when the average amount of duty levied on colonial corn has exceeded 4s. In one year the average was 4s., but in another year it was only 6d.; and the average amount of duty for the whole period has been 2s. 1d. upon American wheat imported through Canada in the shape of flour; for which, by this bill, I propose to substitute a duty of 4s., whatever the price of the market may be. And let the house observe this, that the present duty is chargeable only on the fine flour imported, and only when brought into home consumption in this country; whereas three-fourths of the duty proposed to be levied is to be levied on the whole bulk of wheat imported into Canada, without the credit, which is now obtained, of six, eight, ten, or twelve months, according to the state of the market, and upon the whole amount, including seconds, inferior flour, and the refuse. I do think that 4s., to be so levied, is a fair, just, and ample equivalent for the existing duty.

Sir C. NAPIER: It is more than ample.

Lord STANLEY: The hon. and gallant gentleman says, it is more than an ample duty; but let him recollect that at the present moment a duty of 5s. attaches invariably, till the price of wheat is 55s. I know by what objection I shall immediately be met here. I have anticipated it in the cheer I have already heard from the other side of the house, when the subject of a fixed duty was mentioned. "After all," it will be said, "you are coming down to a fixed duty of 4s. upon wheat." I beg to say I am not coming down to any such thing. I am coming down to no fixed duty of 4s. on wheat. I should have been glad to know how the noble lord opposite, who proposed a fixed duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, would have dealt with this particular article, and whether he would have subjected to an 8s. duty wheat, the produce of foreign countries, imported through our own colonies, and there undergoing the process of manufacture. Unfortunately the noble lord had not the opportunity of submitting his plan in detail to the consideration of the house; his project was cut off in the bud; but I should like to know how he would have dealt with that question. I have no hesitation in saying, that, whatever may be the advantage of the sliding scale over a fixed duty, setting other objections apart, the fixed duty has the merit of simplicity; and if I could adopt that which, under all circumstances and under all seasons, and with reference to all countries, should strike a fair average of duty, of course I should prefer, as any man of sense would (cheers and a laugh)—I don't think there would be any difference of opinion on any side of the house—I should prefer the simplicity of a fixed duty to the complication inseparable from a sliding scale. (Cheers.) Let the noble lord or any person propose a sliding scale, the extreme point of which shall be 8s. on one side, and 12s. on the other, and I tell the house very frankly, that rather than take a sliding scale, the extreme of whose protection should be 8s. the *minimum*, and 12s. the *maximum*, and for that variation rendering necessary the complicated machinery of the averages, I would infinitely prefer the average between these two amounts and take the fixed duty of 10s. rather than the fluctuating duty. (Loud cheers.) The advantage of a sliding scale arises from the extent of range which

it must cover; you can take no amount which shall fairly represent an average of a duty ranging from 20s. to 1s. If the scale vibrates only for 3s. or 4s., you may dispense with the unnecessary complication of the sliding scale and take the average; but if you have a scale with a protective duty of 20s. at one end, and a comparatively free admission at 1s. at the other, proportioning the protection to the varying exigences of the case, no average can be struck (cheers). Therefore, I say, it is perfectly consistent in me, if the duty is to vary from 1s. to 4s., to say I prefer a fixed duty, whatever it may be, between those limits, and at the same time to say, that if at one time you require comparatively free importation, and at another protection amounting to almost a prohibitory duty, I take the sliding scale, because you can have no fair average in such a state of things (cheers). But, again suppose a distinction is to be drawn in favour of Canadian wheat—that Canadian wheat imported into this country is to be subjected to no duty, or only a nominal duty, and American wheat to a protecting duty, I want to know, if the duty is to be levied in Canada, in what manner it is even possible to have a sliding scale from 4s. down to 1s.? (hear, hear.) In what manner will you at the Canadian frontier fix the sliding scale, and declare the averages with reference to the price in this country? If you are to draw the distinction between Canadian and American wheat, you must levy the duty on the Canadian frontier, and not in this country. If you are to levy the duty on the Canadian frontier, and not in this country, then the sliding scale is impracticable. Levying a duty only varying 2s. or 3s., the sliding scale is inapplicable; and without departing in any degree from the principle of protection as applied to the agricultural interest in this country, you have no resource but a fixed duty between the very narrow limits to which your scale would fluctuate to one side or another. (Cheers). I have answered this argument to the best of my ability (cheers); but I confess I do not lay much stress on it as an argument. It may do very well to excite a Parliamentary cheer, or to raise a taunt of personal inconsistency (hear, hear); but against the measure, as I propose it, it is no argument at all (hear, hear); and I have shown that it is not an argument, that, on the ground of inconsistency, can fairly be urged against those who support a sliding scale. I now come to a more important point; that is, will the duty in Canada be levied? Be the duty what it may, it would be levied in the Custom-house in this country; and I am ready to admit, that if any reasonable apprehension can be entertained on the ground that the duty might not be levied in Canada, it would be a strong argument against the measure which I propose. Never was there a more chimerical apprehension entertained than that wheat would be smuggled into Canada to escape a duty of 3s. (Hear, hear). I will prove it to you from circumstances, from probability, from practice. Hon. gentlemen are very much in the habit of saying that the boundary between Canada and the United States is for a long distance a mere river, that there is no difficulty in passing it, and that you might easily throw a biscuit across it; but what is the real state of the case? I put Lower Canada out of the question altogether, because it produces little or no wheat; certainly very far short of what is required for its own consumption. The whole of the wheat of which the Canadas have any surplus, of their own produce, is grown in Upper Canada. A large portion of that which comes into this country is not the produce of

Canada at all, but of the United States, the great states of the west—Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana. From the point at which the St. Lawrence becomes the boundary between Canada and the United States to Kingston, the distance is 70 or 80 miles, up a very rapid and broken river.

Mr. ROEBUCK: There is not a single rapid from Prescott to Kingston. I know the place well. I have gone up the river in a canoe hundreds of times.

Lord STANLEY: Be it so; but that is not the district in which the wheat is produced. Above Kingston comes Lake Ontario, about 150 miles long; it is united by the Niagara River to Lake Erie, a lake of 200 miles long, both of these lakes varying from 60 to 70 miles in breadth. There is, therefore, a distance of from 350 to 400 miles, connected only by a river for the space of 20 miles, that river including the rapids above, and the whirlpools below, the falls of Niagara, perfectly impracticable. The wheat-growing districts are, in the first place, the Canadian districts on the north of Lake Erie, and the great American districts to the south-west. These are the districts—Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, from which corn is brought to Cleveland, the principal shipping port of Ohio, and thence the trade is carried on partly in steamers, but principally in large schooners built for carrying cargoes of this nature; passing through the Welland Canal and a succession of British locks into Lake Ontario, and thence to Montreal, whence shipments are made to this country. There is a distance of above five hundred miles between the ports of shipment. The north side of Lake Erie is cultivated to a certain extent, and grows Canadian corn; the south side is cultivated by the Americans. The schooners engaged in the trade are all perfectly well known—they carry on their operations as a regular systematic trade—their owners are all known; the north coast, on the Canadian side, is singularly destitute of all harbours; the lakes they have to cross are about four times as wide as the Straits of Dover; if it were attempted to run a cargo of wheat, and land it on the Canadian side for the purpose of saving 3s. per quarter duty, the mere expense of landing and conveying it again to a wharf, and transshipping it, would very materially exceed the duty which it was the object of this not very wise smuggler to evade. (Hear, hear). I would ask any of my hon. friends the members for Kent and Sussex—did you ever hear of French wheat being smuggled and landed on your shores? No—and why not? Because, first, although the duty is much higher, the risk more than counterbalances it; and, next, for this very good reason, which equally applies to Canada as to Kent and Sussex—that the shore to which the smuggler must come is occupied by persons whose direct and immediate purpose it is to prevent the possibility of smuggling that particular article. It is quite true, that it is in some cases easy enough to smuggle from Canada to the United States, and from the United States to Canada—it is easy for fugitives from justice—it is easy for deserters from the service—it is easy to carry over a pound of tea or silk in a canoe—but to carry over a quarter of wheat at great risk, and where there are no harbours and few roads, to re-ship and transship it, for the purpose of evading a 3s. duty, is the most chimerical apprehension ever entertained. (Hear, hear). Does practice bear us out in this view? From 1825 to 1831 there was imposed a duty of,

not 3s., but 8s. a quarter on United States wheat imported into Canada. I have not been able to ascertain the precise amount of duty which was collected ; it is included in the general revenue of the colony ; but in the Blue Books of the colony, although they are not altogether to be depended upon for accuracy as official returns, I find that in every year a certain amount of American wheat was imported and brought to charge ; and in no one year from 1825 to 1831, while 8s. per quarter was charged, was there any allegation from any quarter whatever that a single bushel of wheat had been smuggled into Canada or had evaded the duty. (Hear, hear). Here, at least, is negative proof—no such allegation was ever made. (Hear, hear). But perhaps hon. gentlemen may say they will smuggle flour into this country ; why don't they smuggle flour now ? I will tell you why. The duty is sufficiently high to tempt them ; but it is with flour as it is with respect to corn—the interest of the whole population is against the smuggler of flour, and in favour of the levy of the duty. (Hear, hear). Let the house recollect that the duty on American flour imported into this country is 20s. per quarter ; on Canadian flour it is 5s. Under the existing law, therefore, the temptation to smuggle flour into Canada, for the purpose of having it introduced as Canadian flour into this country, amounts to 15s. per quarter, or 300 per cent. on the duty ; and yet to this hour I never heard the allegation made that one single barrel of flour had been smuggled into Canada ; nor do I believe that a single barrel has ever been introduced without a *bona fide* certificate. (Hear). On the practice, therefore, of six years, during which an 8s. duty was levied on the clear interest of all parties on the spot to prevent smuggling—on the physical impediments standing in the way—in the absence of any allegation that it has ever existed—on all these grounds, I say, no apprehension of smuggling need be entertained. This was the view taken before the 8s. duty passed, both by Lord Dalhousie in Canada, and Lords Liverpool and Bathurst in this country, when it was said we should be inundated with American wheat and flour ; and when that duty was taken off as part of the Customs' regulations of the year by Mr. P. Thompson, not a single allegation was made that it had been evaded. (Hear, hear). I have endeavoured to deal with this question with reference to the apprehensions which have been entertained as to the importation of American wheat under the name of Canadian wheat : with the permission of the house I will now consider the question as it affects the importation, at a reduced rate of duty, of *bona fide* Canadian produce—the growth as well as the manufacture of Canada ; and here I say distinctly, that it is our wish to give encouragement to colonial produce, to the agriculture of Canada ; that as a Government we are pledged to do so, and that we may safely do it without detriment to any interest in this country. (Hear, hear). This is an object which Canada has had at heart for the last twenty or twenty-five years ; and I have in my hand a succession of despatches from Governors, and memorials from Boards of Trade and from both branches of the Legislature, from the year 1821 to the present time, all urging the propriety of acceding to their prayer in this respect. If there be one subject of legislation upon which Canada from one end to the other has been and is unanimous, it is in urging that, in order to enable them to consume more largely the manufactures of this country, you will treat them as part of the parent state and admit on easy terms the *bona fide*

produce of their agriculture. I say you may safely grant this boon. I know not whether I ought to argue on a question of this kind, because if the boon ought to be granted, I am satisfied there is sufficient public spirit in the country not to weigh too nicely the possible disadvantage to our own interests (hear); but, I say, you may safely grant it without any injury to agricultural interests—without any reduction in the existing price of agricultural produce. Let the house recollect, that hitherto the import of American wheat into Canada has been wholly free; and what quantity has been imported into this country? In the course of the last 13 years, from 1830 to 1843, the amount of wheat and wheat flour imported into this country from Canada, including what was imported from the United States, was only 1,153,968 quarters. That is to say, somewhere about 90,000 quarters of wheat is the whole amount, which, upon an average of thirteen years, Canada has been able annually to export to this country; not, be it remembered, from her surplus produce only, but that being absolutely the whole of her surplus produce, supported and backed up by all that she could import from the United States free of duty (hear, hear). And this brings me to the question, at what rate can this Canadian corn be imported and brought into consumption here? This is not an unimportant point to keep in view, in the discussion of any measure having for its object to give greater facilities to the trader. Now I find that, of the 1,153,968 quarters, there were imported at and above 67s. 387,389 quarters; at and above 55s., and under 67s. 566,748 quarters; making in the whole above 950,000 quarters, out of 1,153,000, imported and brought into consumption here, when the price in this country exceeded 55s. a quarter. At lower prices than these, about 93,000 quarters were imported when the prices ranged from 50s. to 55s., and the whole amount brought into consumption, when the prices were under 50s., scarcely exceeded 106,000 quarters during the whole thirteen years' importation* (Hear, hear). But this is not all. I will go further, and will show you how, and when, and under what circumstances the importation took place when wheat was below 50s. in price. I have not the returns as to flour; but I have a return as to wheat, and I find this result:—There were three years, and three years only, in which wheat was brought into consumption from Canada, at a rate of price below 50s. in this country; and those were the three years—1834, 1835, and 1836. Now, I beg attention to these facts. 1831 and 1832 were years of very high prices, and accordingly wheat from Canada, imported and

* The following Table will, perhaps, assist in explaining the noble lord's figures :
Wheat and Flour, the produce of British North American Colonies, admitted to Home Consumption between the 5th of Jan. 1830, and the 5th of Jan. 1843.

	Wheat.	Wheat Flour.	Wheat and Wheat Flour stated in qrs.
	Quarters.	Consumption.	Quarters.
When the average price of wheat was under 50s.	74,438	111,626	106,332
50s. and under 55s.	75,123	62,217	93,499
55s. and under 67s.	270,186	1,037,965	566,748
67s. and upwards	166,579	772,838	387,389
Totals	586,326	1,984,646	1,153,968

brought into consumption, was, in the first year, 110,000 quarters, and in the next year, 164,000 quarters. The next year, 1833, was a year in which the price varied from 49s. 10d. to 55s. ; and in that year the import fell from 164,000 to 61,501 quarters. The three next years were years of constantly falling prices. In the first year prices fell to 41s. 10d. ; in the next, to 36s. 10d. ; and at the commencement of the third year prices for a considerable period averaged 36s. 8d. Now, in these years, so hopeless did the Canadian merchants consider the prospect, that, by referring to the returns moved for by the honourable member for Bristol, and now upon the table of the house, you will see that not a single quarter of wheat was imported from Canada in the years 1835, 1836, and 1837 ; and that the merchants who had brought large stocks into this country upon the faith of the high prices of 1831 and 1832, and who held back in 1833 in the expectation that they would yet be able to realize a profit by the rallying of prices, were obliged, at last, in 1834, 1835, and 1836, to bring their stocks into the market at a very considerable loss, and the wheat sold under these circumstances constituted the whole of the Canadian wheat ever brought in any year into the British market at prices below 50s. per quarter (hear, hear). This, then, at least, is satisfactory evidence—in the first place, that no great importation of Canadian corn is to be apprehended when the average prices in this country are low ; and next, it is satisfactory proof that Canadian wheat cannot be profitably introduced and sold here unless prices range at least from 50s. to 56s., nor, probably, unless they are higher even than the latter average. And mind, these prices were under a system of free importation from the United States. When there is a duty of 3s. per quarter on the importation of that corn into Canada, will it not necessarily follow that prices at Montreal must rise ? (hear, hear, from Lord Howick). The noble lord cheers me, and I can understand his cheers ; but let me remind him that I do not seek by this measure to establish any system of unlimited free trade (ironical cheers from the opposition). Sir, I do not bring this measure forward as a measure of free trade, and I give the noble lord the benefit of that admission. With his notions respecting unlimited free trade he has quite a right to resist my motion. If he desires to sweep away all distinctions—if he wishes to deprive the colonies and the agriculturists of the mother country of all protection—if he wishes to put all nations on a perfect equality with regard to the introduction of corn—he is quite justified in opposing my motion (hear, hear). He is justified in doing so, because, as I repeat, this motion is not a motion for free trade (cheers) ; it is not founded upon that principle—it is founded upon quite a different principle (cheers)—it is founded, I tell the noble lord, upon the principle of giving encouragement to the agricultural industry and to the produce of our colonies (loud cheering)—leaving the protection of our native agriculture, as respects the United States of America, as nearly as possible in the same condition in which we found it—neither increasing nor attempting to reduce it (hear, hear). I stated at the outset, and I will again repeat it, that it is as a measure of encouragement to our colonies, and of undiminished protection to the home grower, and not as a measure founded on the principles of free trade, that this measure has been brought forward by her Majesty's Ministers (hear, hear). Now, Sir, I laid upon the table of the house, in the course of the present session, a number of calculations, with which, however, I will not fatigue the house, because I do not rest any

part of my case upon them. They were calculations which proceeded from the committee of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, and which were laid before the Assembly of that province. They were not received by the Government, nor laid upon the table until after the announcement of this measure ; but, however favourable for my purpose, I do not quote them as a part of my case, because, whilst I do not in any way discredit their accuracy, the measure I am about to propose is wholly independent of their calculations, and they were indeed laid before Parliament simply because her Majesty's Government would not allow it to be said, " You have information from Canada which you promised to lay upon the table, and which you now withhold, because you think it does not bear out your views" (hear, hear). But, Sir, I will call attention to a document laid upon the table with reference to the current prices at Montreal and Quebec at the present time. This return is certainly not as full as we might desire, for this very good reason, that there are no accurate returns, no law being in force in Canada to regulate the taking of the averages. But, incomplete as it may be, you will still be able to derive considerable information from the return to which I am referring. You will find, on the authority of the persons best able to give you information, that the prices at Montreal and at Quebec, under no circumstances, fall below 40s. a quarter. They generally range at from 45s. to 50s. the quarter ; and by making inquiry of any merchant, you will find that the lowest amount at which the importation from Quebec, independent of any profit, can be made, is 12s. 6d., 13s. 6d., or 14s., a quarter, which charge must of course be added to the price of 45s. to 50s. a quarter, before you can introduce in average years any Canadian wheat into the home market. (Hear, hear.) I have several returns from merchants in support of these calculations, but I will not trouble the house with any of these statements, as they might be supposed to proceed from parties whose interests might bias their judgment ; but I have a statement here which is not open to any objection of that kind ; it is taken from a Boston paper, the *Boston Courier*, where it is published in the shape of an extract from the communication of a correspondent of the *Cleveland (Ohio) Herald*, and who says fairly enough :—" The object of the British Ministry is evident on the face of the measure. It is to promote the emigration of British farmers to Canada, where as good wheat lands exist as in any part of the world ; to give protection to the Canadian millers ; to provide employment for the British shipping connected with Canada, recently deprived, by their imperial tariff, of the lumber trade, and, in times of scarcity in bread stuffs in England, to give their own subjects a pre-eminent advantage over foreigners in operating under a fixed duty, whilst others have the hazard of the sliding scale of duties." The correspondent then goes into very minute calculations, by which he arrives at the conclusion, that in the present state of, or without a considerable rise of price in, the British market, the Canadian merchant cannot afford to go to Ohio as a purchaser of corn, with a view to take any advantage of the facility which this law will give him of importing United States corn through Canada into this country. This correspondent also refers, in a striking and convincing manner, to the expenses of shipment and transit from Montreal to this country, placing the expense of such shipment at a dollar and a half the barrel of flour, that is to say, at about 6s. 2d., or 6s. 3d., making, as nearly as possible, the amount per quarter at which I have already calculated the shipping expenses. He concludes by saying :—" A sale of flour, therefore, in England at 30s. per barrel, would only

leave the Montreal shipper, as a profit, the current difference in exchange between Montreal and London, say 7 per cent. on 5 dols. 19 cents, which would be 35 cents a barrel profit. Any person having experience in the trade will readily admit, that 35 cents margin is not sufficient where flour is up to 30s. per barrel—it will not cover the hazard of a decline in the present appearance of the English market.” (Hear, hear.) Now I do not wish to weary the house by going over these minute calculations, nor, indeed, is it necessary that I should do so at present, though I may be compelled to return to them at some future occasion. But what is material for us to consider, and what I beg to impress on the house is, that though this may not be a measure of free trade—immaterial as you may consider it—immaterial as I consider it—to the consumer in this country—and insignificant as I think it must be admitted to be when it is considered as a measure affecting the British agriculturalists, yet, the introduction of Canadian corn at a 1s. duty, while not encouraging nor fostering any more than the present law, the importation of wheat from the United States, will be, to all intents and purposes, in its practical effects and moral results, a measure of inestimable value to Canada, and if to Canada, to the empire at large. (loud cheers.) Sir, this measure is an object for which Canada has long contended and anxiously hoped. This is not the first time the proposition has been submitted to Parliament; this is not the first time I have expressed my opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.) In the course of last session the question was brought before the house in a tangible and definite shape. In the course of the discussion on the Corn Bill then under consideration, the hon. member for Limerick proposed to permit the introduction of wheat, the produce of British possessions in North America, or elsewhere out of Europe, at a fixed duty of 1s. per quarter. I objected to that amendment, but I stated but one single objection to it. In the face of the house and the country I stated, as my only ground of objection to the adoption of the proposal, that, by consenting to it, we should clearly be importing free of duty, not Canadian, but American wheat, and that I was not prepared to introduce American wheat free of duty, though prepared to give encouragement and support to the agriculture of Canada. But perhaps I may be excused if I cite my own expressions on the subject. I quote from “Hansard’s Debates,” and this is the language I then used:—“It is not just to call upon us, under the plausible argument of giving encouragement to Canadian agriculture, to relieve from the burden of duty all the corn and flour which passes from America through Canada, taking, at the same time, no means to prevent ourselves from being inundated with American corn. This is the ground on which I, for one, cannot concur with the motion of the hon. gentleman. If there was any alteration of the law which regulates the importation of wheat into Canada—if there was such a restriction on wheat going into Canada as would free this country from competition with American corn, under the name of Canadian corn—then the Canadians would be entitled to a greater relief.” That is the language which I, as a Minister of the Crown—as a Minister charged with colonial affairs, used as the main ground for resisting the hon. gentleman’s motion. A number of the friends of the agricultural interest were present in the house at the time, and no objection was taken to the grounds upon which I rested my argument. Not a single gentleman contravened the position I laid down. The motion was rejected on those grounds, and, simultaneously with that rejection, a despatch was sent from this country, which,

by my directions, was laid before the legislature of Canada, inviting them, in terms not to be mistaken, to qualify themselves, by imposing a duty on American wheat, to receive a boon at the hands of the British Government, which I, on the part of that Government, was ready to extend, and which I did not believe the British Parliament would refuse to confirm. (Cheers). And here let me entreat the house to recollect what was the position of Canada when that despatch was transmitted. At that time you had just accomplished a most perilous experiment: you had quelled a most serious revolt in that country—you had recently consolidated the interests of that country by the perilous experiment of a union of the two provinces—you had, for the first time, met a united legislature; and it was under circumstances such as these that Sir Charles Bagot was authorized to make, as his first communication to that united legislature, a tender of good-will—a promise that the country should be treated as an integral part of the British empire, and that it should send its produce home at a nominal rate of duty, provided it gave a certain security, which it was necessary for your interests to demand. That tender of good-will—that proposition on the part of the British Government—was received with unanimous approbation and gratitude. A bill was introduced into the Canadian Legislature to carry out the views of her Majesty's Government, by imposing the required duty on American corn. In its progress through the lower house, that measure led to division on one point, and on one point only. A proposal was made to tack to the bill imposing a 3s. duty on American wheat, a condition that it should not be of force unless the British Parliament granted the promised boon. Some gentlemen professed a doubt of the intentions of the British Government, and urged that it was necessary that the Legislature should take securities against a failure on our part. But the Legislature refused to entertain any such doubt. "We will not indulge," they said, "in any such unworthy suspicions. We never had such a doubt, and we will imply no such bad faith. We believe that the Minister intends what he speaks. His language is not to be mistaken. We will not indulge in unworthy suspicions." The proviso was accordingly negatived by a very large majority, and the bill passed unanimously through both branches of the Legislature of a colony which not long before had been convulsed by internal dissensions and hostility against the mother-country, from one end of it to the other. (Cheers). That bill, Sir, is sent home for the sanction of the Crown. Of course I have not advised the Crown to sanction that act of the Canadian Legislature, nor shall I advise the Crown to sanction it, until the House of Commons shall have enabled me to perform my part of the contract. I hold myself in personal honour bound—I hold the Government in good faith, as well as in good policy, pledged to omit no exertion to carry into effect the convention we entered into with the Canadian provinces, in the face of Parliament and of the country. (Cheers). I hold that we are bound to strain every nerve to preclude the possibility of expectations being blasted, which we were so instrumental in exciting. I hold that it would be the basest conduct on our part to say to the Canadian Legislature, "You have, it is true, vied with each other in expressions of gratitude for this boon. The prospect has been held out to you of improvement to your country, by renewed and closer connexion with Great Britain; you have evinced your anxiety to improve that connexion—you have complied with our conditions—you have expressed your gratitude—but you have expressed it too soon, for this boon shall not be conferred on you—not because we entertain any real

apprehension of its effect, but because there are some in this country who do entertain such fears, and, unfounded though they may be, unfounded though they are, to those fears and apprehensions we must and will defer." (Very loud cheering). I ask you, then, as members of the House of Commons—I ask you, as legislators, responsible for the conduct of the affairs of this mighty empire—do you believe it wise—do you believe it politic—do you believe it just—do you believe it generous—do you believe that it is safe thus to trifle with the feelings, the expectations, and the hopes of those who unanimously acceded to your terms, and who gratefully accepted your proffered boon? (Very loud cheering.) Will you accept the responsibility, and tell the Canadians, "We will not give you this boon: the cup of rejoicing shall be struck from your hand, and dashed in mockery from your lips?" (Loud and prolonged cheering). No, Sir, I do not believe the House of Commons will take such a course. I know not what may be the intention of the right hon. gentleman, in moving that the house do not advise her Majesty to consent to the Canadian bill. But I tell him, whatever the intention, that it is needless. If the house reject this measure, I tell him frankly that the first official measure I shall perform, even if it be the last, shall be to advise her Majesty to disallow the bill; that is, if I find, as I trust I shall not, that this house does not enable me to fulfil the conditions upon which alone that bill was passed by the Canadian Legislature. (Cheers). But do not think that, in that case, matters will remain as they are. Do not believe that, in that event, the people of Canada will rest satisfied, as if you had never made them this offer. Do not believe that you can so trifle with the feelings and wishes of the population of that great and important colony. And even if you could so trifle, is it wise for you—and I now address myself to those who are the most intimately connected with the agriculture of this country—is it wise for you to set up this line of distinction between yourselves and your fellow-countrymen in Canada? You desire protection against the free importation of all foreign corn, from whatever quarter it may come. I do not say that your home produce, on an average of years, is likely to be at all times insufficient to supply your home demand; but I cannot help reminding you that, notwithstanding the emigration that is now going on to the extent of 100,000 per annum, the population that remains is increasing at the rate of 300,000 a year. (Loud opposition cheers). And if your population at home should outgrow your average supply of home production, I ask, where, in the first instance, is it wise to look for the means of supplying the deficiency? (Loud cheers). I ask you, would it be wise to look for it, with an equal and impartial eye, to all quarters of the globe, without considering the prices at which the supply may be introduced, without reference to the amount which may be forced in upon you, without reference to the circumstances under which this country may be placed, or without regard to an increase in the demand for the products of British industry? (Repeated cheers). If you desire a source of supply made to your hand, which should meet all the conditions that a prudent agriculturist would desire, and to which any one regarding the interests, whether agricultural or commercial, of this great country, would be disposed to look, I would direct you to that great area, which, with a climate not very dissimilar to your own, is cultivated by your own countrymen, which is capable of producing an increased supply, but which is not capable of furnishing that supply, unless prices should rise to such an amount

as to indicate a deficiency in the home produce. The supply of that country will be furnished you from a province with which it is important you should continue the most intimate relations; which is the main and chief hold upon that vast continent for British interest, feeling, and affection; which is the refuge of your surplus labourers, where they may still labour in their accustomed toil, and furnish supplies to their accustomed market—where they may still look to England, not as a country from which they are banished, but as a country to which they cling and feel that they belong; which is capable of supplying your deficiencies, though not of supplanting your productions; which must consume your manufactures, and which has only this one desire, to possess additional means of paying for them. (Cheers). It is a country which is subject to no hostile tariff (loud cheers)—a country which realizes all the recommendations that were lately made in the most forcible and eloquent terms by the hon. and learned member for Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller), when he told you to increase, by promoting the intercourse with your colonies, the area for providing for your home consumption, and where you could command a market for your manufactures in return. If you have apprehensions that, in the course of years, your supply may gradually fall short of the demands of this country, I say that, free from all the objections which attach to an unrestricted importation from foreign countries, you have the means in your own hands of meeting the deficiency; and at the same time commanding the trade, maintaining it in your own hands, supporting your shipping interest, improving the condition of your own fellow-countrymen, knitting closely to yourselves, by interest and affection, that portion of the great continent of America which you may hold with signal benefit to yourselves, but not so unless you hold it by the good-will and affection of the people of Canada;—I say, on all these grounds, agricultural, commercial, and political—upon the grounds of justice and expediency—on the ground of the faith which her Majesty's Government have pledged to Canada, and which I confidently believe the house will enable us to maintain, I will submit with all confidence to the house the plain statement I have made, without exaggerations on the one side or the other, in the full assurance that the house will enable the Government of her Majesty to redeem the implied contract into which it has entered. (Cheers). With these feelings, Sir, I appeal to the house in the fullest confidence; and I shall now, in the first instance, submit a proposal that you, Sir, do leave the chair, in order that, the house being in Committee, I may introduce the resolutions of which I have given notice, and which are to form the groundwork of the bill I intend to introduce as a member of the Government, and for the principle of which, whilst in all its details it will be open to your fullest discussion and consideration, I confidently anticipate the sanction of Parliament. (The Noble Lord resumed his seat amid vehement and long-protracted plaudits).



